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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **New Oral History Collection Gives Voice to Thousands; Open Access through May**

**(Alexandria, VA - April 20, 2004)** Alexander Street Press this week launched the largest Web index of English-language oral histories ever assembled – *Oral History Online*. More than 7,000 interviews and 850 collections, spanning topics from MARC records to Jim Crow to skateboarding in New Zealand, have been fully indexed and are – through May – freely accessible.

The collections and interviews reside in repositories around the world, ranging from Columbia University's Oral History Research Office (New York) to the Imperial War Museum (London) to The Sydney Opera House (Australia). Said Eileen Lawrence, Alexander Street's vice president of sales and marketing, "It's as if we're putting a microphone to thousands of original voices that have been speaking to us all along – but that we haven't been able to hear."

And what voices! The collection provides first-person narratives of the common man alongside those of world leaders. These are the intimate, oft-neglected stories that document what went on behind the scenes – not the well polished words of formal publications. Covering fields ranging from women's studies to psychology to business, the narratives provide the power of perspectives that have hitherto been missed. For more than 2,700 interviews, the index provides keyword searching of transcripts and links to the associated full text. In more than 300 cases, audio or video links are also present.

The ease of Web publishing has spawned literally hundreds of new oral history collections, with more becoming available every year – but with no easy way to find or search them. "That difficulty of access has forced oral histories to take a back seat to more traditional sources for historical research – journals and books," explained Stephen Rhind-Tutt, Alexander Street's president. "And yet historians tell us that these narratives are essential for the teaching of twentieth century history." *Oral History Online*, the first major audit of these materials, finally makes them easy to search and allows the narratives to be cited in formal publications.

*Oral History Online* launched with more than 7,000 interviews from 850 collections. Over the next year, the database is expected to grow to more than 300,000 interviews and more than 2,300 collections.

From now until May 31<sup>st</sup> *Oral History Online* is freely available through open access (no password required). Visit <http://alexanderstreet.com> for more information. Thereafter, it will be sold by annual subscription with prices scaled to library type and budget. Reviews are welcome. Please contact Jennifer Heffelfinger, manager of marketing and public relations ([jheffelfinger@alexanderstreet.com](mailto:jheffelfinger@alexanderstreet.com) or 800-889-5937 ext. 5).

### **AWARDED \*BEST CONTENT\* AND \*BEST CONTRACT OPTIONS\* - THE CHARLESTON ADVISOR'S 2003 READERS' CHOICE AWARDS**

Alexander Street Press, L.L.C., is an academic publisher of electronic full-text databases in the humanities and social sciences. Founded in June 2000, the company publishes collections in history, literature, women's studies, sociology, ethnic and diversity studies, popular culture, film studies, the arts, and other areas. Alexander Street Press is located in Alexandria, Virginia.

**EDITORS:** For additional information on Alexander Street Press and its products, please contact Eileen Lawrence, Vice President, Sales and Marketing, 800-889-5937, email [lawrence@alexanderstreet.com](mailto:lawrence@alexanderstreet.com), or visit <http://alexanderstreet.com>.

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